

Minutes from a Meeting of the Concordia Council on Student Life
Held on November 20, 2009
SGW Campus H-769, 10 am

PRESENT: Ms. Elizabeth Morey (Chair), Ms. Lauren Broad (Secretary), Mr. Gerald Beasley, Dr. Donald Boisvert, Dr. Catherine Bolton, Ms. Claudie Boujaklian, Mr. Roger Côté, Ms. Melanie Drew, Ms. Angela Ghadban, Mr. Daniel Houde, Mr. Jacques Lachance (on behalf of Mr. Jean Brisebois), Mr. Howard Magonet, Mr. Auob Muntasar, Mr. Prince Ralph Osei, Mr. Alexander Oster, Mr. Rodney Roberts (on behalf of Ms. Katherine Hedrich), Ms. Dale Robinson, Mr. Adrien Severyns, Ms. Katie Sheahan, Ms. Stephanie Siriwardhana, Ms. Laura Stanbra, Ms. Brigitte St-Laurent, Ms. Lorraine Toscano, Mr. Mohammad Faisal Uddin, Ms. Rose Wangechi.

ABSENT: Johanne De Cubellis, Ms. Kristen Gregor, Mr. Manu Jain, Ms. Amanda Paquin.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called the meeting to order. Mr. Osei moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Severyns seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed Mr. Lachance who was replacing Mr. Brisebois for the Security Department. She also introduced Mr. Oster, who would be replacing Mr. John Kyras as the new VP Sustainability for the CSU. The Chair welcomed Mr. Howard Magonet, the new Director of Counselling & Development.

The Chair was happy to announce that Siena Anstis, a former Journalism student at Concordia and employee of the Dean of Students Office, had been awarded the Forces Avenir Undergraduate Personality award for her humanitarian work in Kenya. The Chair wished to officially congratulate Ms. Wangechi for being honoured with the 2009 Rising Star Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District I.

The Chair reported that a Continuing Education student representative on CCSL had still not been appointed and that if, by the end of the 2009 semester, the position remained open, the Council would have to examine how to fill this important position.

The Chair announced that funding had been secured through Insertion Professionnelle for the establishment of the Volunteer Bureau. She said that the bureau, as well as the Co-Curricular Record software, would be underway in the Winter 2010 semester.

The Alternative Spring Break (ASB), a new initiative designed to give students the opportunity to volunteer locally or abroad over the reading week, was quickly moving forward. One possible location for the ASB was the Lower North Shore, as the University has been working with their representatives to support educational programs.

The Chair thanked the Bookstore for their contribution of prizes and gifts to the “We Value...” campaign. The campaign had received a video clip endorsement from Rick Mercer, which could now be seen with captions thanks to CUTV, on the University plasma screens. The video was shown to the Council.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 23, 2009

Ms. Toscano requested that the minutes from October 23, 2009 be revised to reflect that she was present at the meeting. Mr. Osei moved to approve the minutes and Ms. Siriwardhana seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5. REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INFORMATION

5.1 Sub-committees

CCSL Awards

Ms. Morey, as Chair of the CCSL Awards sub-committee, reported that she hoped to have a review meeting scheduled before the end of the Fall 2009 semester.

CCSL Special Projects

A summary sheet of all requests for funding from the Fall 2009 semester was distributed to the Council members. Ms. Stanbra reported that there were 45 applications received, with a significant increase in total amount requested compared to Fall 2008; over \$181,000 relative to last year's amount of \$75,000 for 40 projects. She reminded the Council that the amount available in the fund for the entire year was \$150,000 therefore each project had to be carefully reviewed. After deliberations by the Special Projects Committee, 29 projects were approved, an approval rate of 64% compared to last year's Fall approval rate of 72%. Just under \$53,000 was committed to the approved projects. Ms. Stanbra noted that three applications were still pending for review by the entire Council at this meeting, namely the CSU & GSA Legal Information Clinic, the GSA Advocacy Centre and the CSU Speaker Series. The CSU & GSA Legal Information Clinic and the GSA Advocacy Centre were denied funding at the sub-committee level due to the fact that the majority of their expenses were for salary, an item that is excluded for funding according to the Special Projects criteria. The sub-committee wished for the Council to consider a possible one-time exception in terms of allowable expenses under the rationale that there is a great need for these services from students and that both the CSU and GSA had not had enough time to build these services into their current budgets. The CSU and GSA would agree to fund these services from their operating budgets in future years, becoming self-sufficient. The CSU Speaker Series had requested \$50,000 in funding, however were approved for just under \$17,000 since only this amount fell under the allowable expenses as described by the Special Projects criteria. The Special Projects Committee wanted to pursue the possibility of establishing a funding "envelope", similar to that given to HOJO, with a certain amount set aside each year for the Speaker Series, based upon providing a report of activities and expenses. The other option they hoped that the Council would consider was an exemption to approve honoraria as an allowable expense for the Speaker Series. Mr. Osei explained that this year's CSU was committed to bringing in high-profile speakers who would appeal to students in all faculties. The total related expenses for the Speaker Series was expected to be close to \$200,000, of which the CSU would be contributing close to \$70,000. The CSU was also exploring external sources of funding, but hoped that CCSL would consider making an exception to allow for more funding from the Special Projects fund.

Mr. Osei explained that since the University was no longer offering legal services for students there has been increased traffic for the legal services offered by the CSU. Furthermore, Concordia graduate students do not have access to the CSU services. The \$21,620 being requested would be necessary to run the service to accommodate the influx of students seeking assistance and Mr. Osei hoped that by the end of the academic year, alternative funding could be injected into the service from either the CSU operating budget or by asking students to contribute towards the essential service. Mr. Uddin added that the GSA had not been prepared to offer this service to graduate students after the University stopped providing it. The GSA plans to have a fee levy introduced for this service, however Mr. Uddin acknowledged that it could take some time for this to happen. He explained that by joining with the CSU they would be able to provide the service to their members at a much lower cost than they would by doing it on their own. Mr. Uddin said that the amount requested was only to help them in the transition and that by implementing a fee levy in the future, they would be able to run the service without future funding from the CCSL.

Mr. Côté noted that everyone wished to provide the best possible services to students, that the activities by the CSU and GSA have intended to do so, and he felt that needed to be encouraged. Mr. Côté highlighted that the issue at hand is who will provide what and where will the funding come from to deliver these various services. He continued to explain that the Student Services and Recreation & Athletics budgets are based on a three-year cycle, this being the first year in the current cycle. There had been much deliberation at CCSL during the 2008-2009 academic year to approve the sector budgets to be presented to the Board of Governors. It became clear through discussions that the CSU and GSA leadership wanted to contain any increases to student fees, therefore working groups had been established to review the operating budgets, making modifications in order to contain any increases. Mr. Côté recalled that the student leadership had informed CCSL that they would not support an increase in student fees, and the CSU suggested reducing services that they perceived to be duplicates, such as the Legal Information Service (LIS) provided by Advocacy and Support Services. After great consideration, the

2008-2009 CSU executives had assured members of CCSL that they would be able to replace the services provided by the LIS and could absorb the increased level of activity if it were no longer offered. Mr. Côté recognized the current collaboration between the present CSU and GSA and was glad to hear that they were making arrangements to secure future funding on a permanent basis. His understanding was that they were now requesting transitional funding. Mr. Côté added that perhaps the guidelines of the CCSL Special Projects, which would not allow for a majority of the expenses in question to be funded, might need to be reviewed. He asked that the motion regarding financial support for the Concordia Student Parents Centre (CUSP) be considered as well. Mr. Côté was not averse to discussing transitional funding for the projects in question, but suggested that a special group be established to re-examine the CCSL Special Projects framework.

Dr. Boisvert asked if there was an amount being recommended for funding of these projects, and Ms. Stanbra reported the following: the CSU & GSA Legal Information Clinic requested \$21,620; the GSA Advocacy Centre requested \$8,500 and the CSU Speaker Series requested \$50,000. Mr. Muntasar clarified that the Special Projects sub-committee was not expecting the entire request to be approved for the CSU Speaker Series, however they wished for the Council to reconsider the restriction that honoraria or speaker fees were not allowable expenses to be reimbursed. He argued that the CSU Speaker Series reaches a huge percentage of the student body and questioned how it would look if the University did not support it. Dr. Boisvert reminded the Council that the past student executives had assured them in the previous academic year that the CSU would be able to absorb the increased demand that would be put on them by closing the LIS. He also cautioned that by providing such large funding to projects such as the CSU Speaker Series, other smaller groups who do not necessarily have access to other sources of funding might suffer. Dr. Boisvert's understanding of the CCSL Special Projects funding was that it was intended for small projects, on a short-term basis. Ms. Drew said that she would have difficulty justifying the approval of such a large request when the maximum amount of funding was \$1,000 per project. She argued that this would not be a one time exception, as the Speaker Series had been approved for \$25,000 the previous year, which is also well above the maximum amount. She warned that the Council should be cautious before making an exception to the rules. Dr. Bolton conveyed her great support for students, however worried that by continually making exceptions, this would become the norm. Perhaps the rules of the CCSL Special Projects would have to be reviewed, however she felt that as they stood, they were being drastically changed. She also confirmed that the Council had been reassured by the previous student executives that they would be able to compensate for the loss of the LIS from their own budgets. She acknowledged that this situation was quite difficult for the current student executives who were not involved in the previous year's deliberations.

Mr. Osei felt that the amount being requested was not excessive considering the number of high profile speakers that the CSU intended to bring to the University. He felt that the concerns brought forth by the CCSL Special Projects Committee were issues that would concern all students, who were being represented by individuals on the sub-committee. The Chair noted that a review committee had been established two years prior to review the guidelines, however the nature and purpose of the fund was not reviewed. Mr. Uddin argued that projects organized by the GSA and CSU were ones that would touch all students, not just individual departments therefore they should receive the Council's full support. Mr. Côté was encouraged to see the efforts from the CSU and GSA to address the needs of the students and felt comfortable in supporting transitional funding, with the understanding that it will be for this year only and not in future years. Mr. Côté felt that the intent of the CCSL Special Projects fund should be reviewed now for future years, but in the meantime was willing to discuss the possibility of making an exception for this year's CSU Speaker Series. Seeing that the amount requested was one-third of the entire funding available for the year, Mr. Côté felt that further discussion would be necessary to determine a fair amount. Ms. St-Laurent asked what the GSA would do if they were not able to secure future funding for the Advocacy Centre through a referendum to institute a student fee levy and Mr. Uddin assured her that by providing the services this year, students would realize their great value and would not want to lose them by refusing a fee levy. Ms. St-Laurent also worried that not enough proper reflection had been done by the GSA in terms of training and supervision for the Advocacy Centre. She stressed the importance of consistency in services provided and how graduate cases are often much more delicate and complicated than undergraduate cases. After much discussion, Mr. Côté, seconded by Mr. Osei, proposed the following motions to the Council:

1. *Whereas the Council recognizes the need for a review of the CCSL Special Projects guidelines;*

Be it resolved that the CCSL establish a sub-committee to review the CCSL Special Projects guidelines in February 2010 in order to address the changing needs of the student body and to propose their recommendations to the Council for discussion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. *Be it resolved that the CCSL approve the request by the CSU and GSA for CCSL Special Projects funding for the Legal Information Clinic project in the amount of \$21,620 with the stipulation that the CSU and GSA will secure future funding and will not return to the CCSL for operating funds to support this service in future years.*

Be it resolved that the CCSL approve the request by the GSA for CCSL Special Projects funding for the Advocacy Centre project in the amount of \$8,500 with the stipulation that the GSA will secure future funding and will not return to the CCSL for operating funds to support this service in future years.

A vote was put before the Council:

For: 11

Against: 3

Abstentions: 1

The motion passed.

3. *Be it resolved that the request for support of the CSU Speaker Series project returned to the CCSL Special Projects sub-committee for review, with their recommendations to be brought back to the Council for approval.*

The motion passed unanimously.

5.2 Motion regarding 2008-2009 CCSL Special Projects Funds

Ms. Ghadban, seconded by Mr. Osei, proposed the following motion, which had been distributed to the Council prior to the meeting:

Whereas the CCSL surplus from 2008-09 was earmarked in part for the Co-Curricular Report Card (approx. \$14,000);

Whereas the funding for the Co-Curricular Report Card and supporting services will be provided from another source;

Whereas the number of student parents studying at Canadian universities is estimated at approximately 11% of the undergraduate student population (SLID, 2004);

Whereas Financial Aid and Awards has estimated that over 1100 Concordia students on financial awards are parents;

Whereas many international graduate students are also parents;

Whereas the Concordia University Student Parent Centre (CUSP) has seen a steady increase in the number of student members;

Whereas CUSP has been operating only 15 hours per week due to limited resources to hire a full-time student coordinator;

Whereas services provided at CUSP depend in large part on volunteers;

Whereas over 200 students and their children showed up at the welcome reception of the Centre in September 2009;

Whereas in October there was an excellent turnout at a session on parenting skills and a community kitchen with students attending indicating an interest in continuing;

Whereas there has been an increasing number of requests for programming and services;

Whereas both the CSU and the GSA have expressed support for the CUSP;

Be it resolved that the CCSL 2008-09 operating surplus of \$14,000 be used to increase the contract hours of the present student staff member of the CUSP Office, which reports to the Dean of Students Office, from 15 hours per week to full-time 35 hours per week for the period of December 1, 2009 to May 31, 2010 of the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

The motion passed unanimously.

5.3 Expansion of Recreation & Athletics Facilities at Concordia – high level overview and progress report

Ms. Sheahan said that she would be giving a presentation to inform members of CCSL of the various projects in the expansion of the Recreation & Athletics facilities at the University. There were many comprehensive initiatives that would be taking place over several years and she wished to offer a model of how they would deal with issues that may arise. Ms. Sheahan hoped the informal presentation would open a dialogue and conversation amongst students, staff and faculty. Ms. Sheahan gave a Power Point presentation to the Council and encouraged questions throughout. She conveyed that the expansion would contribute to the social fabric of Concordia, with the belief in a strong connection between body and mind. Dr. Bolton asked how far along the developments were in terms of the \$60 million budget, and Ms. Sheahan reported that they were at the precipice of getting the \$60 million in place and that they had applied for two-thirds of their goal in government funding. Ms. Toscano asked if the expansion at Le Gym downtown included the locker rooms, and Ms. Sheahan replied that it could, but it had not been finalized. Mr. Osei asked Ms. Sheahan to explain the “window of opportunity” she spoke about in her presentation with regards to securing funding from the government. Ms. Sheahan explained that in 2006, the taxes that were previously collected to pay off the Olympic Stadium were made available for the province to distribute to such projects. The project proposal was left with the government, who said that they would consider it in its entirety and would come back with questions. The City made the decision that all aspects of the project exceeded the size of what they were willing to contribute, therefore other projects would be considered first. The government did say that they wanted to examine the component parts of the project, and encouraged the University to bring political pressure with them. Legal Council had prepared a summary of ideas of how the University could lever pressure and Ms. Sheahan reported that the next six to twelve months would be their window of opportunity to exert that pressure. Mr. Severyns asked whether this expansion would increase fees to students. Ms. Sheahan answered that in terms of recreational operations, no, however in terms of participation of students in the overall University fundraising for this project, yes. Mr. Oster wished to congratulate Recreation & Athletics for the work being done and said that he felt the University was truly seeking out the needs of its students. However he did express his concern that the project would remove valuable green space on the Loyola campus. Ms. Sheahan reassured everyone that the planning would not disturb the space on the North side of Sherbrooke Street, and that the architectural design was done as responsibly as possible to minimize any encroachment of green space.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Stanbra announced that the move of the Financial Aid & Awards Office into the GM building scheduled for January 2010 had been moved to February 2010 due to construction delays. Ms. Drew added that Health Services would start their move into the GM building in mid-December. Construction would continue into January 2010, which would mean that there would be no services available during the first week of classes on the downtown campus. She was not worried, as most students are slow to return after the holiday break. She anticipated that the department would be reopened as of January 11, 2010 and felt confident that they would be able to minimize the negative impact on students, as the Loyola campus facilities would remain available to all students.

Mr. Osei reported that the work on the gender-neutral washrooms had been stalled, with an additional \$27,000 cost above the initial estimate, due to the possibility of an issue with asbestos. The CCSL had approved \$25,000 for the project, therefore additional funding would have to be found somewhere for the unanticipated costs. Ms. Drew suggested that someone from Facilities who could speak to the situation could come to discuss with the Council. Ms. Osei noted that Ms. Helene Vallée was the project coordinator.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for January 29, 2010, 10am, Loyola AD-210.

7. TERMINATION OF MEETING

Mr. Oster motioned to terminate the meeting. Mr. Severyns seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.